Foreign experience in the use of electronic textbooks

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ABSTRACT

Electronic textbooks are not new; but, they have not been widely used in the public education system. Even though many have predicted the popularity of electronic textbooks, the uptake has been less than anticipated. This article reviews research literature to uncover the use and the acceptance of electronic textbooks with foreign experience. It discusses research studies which have shown an effect on students' learning and concludes with a discussion based on the studies and using foreign experience.

Keywords: Electronic textbooks, learner, education, experience, future development, e-books, creative, methods, distance learning, comfort, using textbooks, foreign learning style, technology, electronic platforms, printed books.

1. INTRODUCTION

"Textbook" means "a book used as a standard work for the study of a subject". "Electronic textbooks" means textbooks that are available in digital or electronic format. Electronic textbooks have been around for a while but are still not widely recognized. Even with the rapid growth in technology and the electronic world, the acceptance of electronic textbooks varies at different educational levels. Major reasons limiting the uptake of electronic textbooks include digital rights management restrictions, software and hardware diversity, limited collections, and design issues related to electronic textbooks. Most importantly, the value of using electronic textbooks for students remains unclear. Finally, the term electronic book is not well understood. They can also be downloaded from websites. Electronic textbooks are sometimes called web-textbooks, online textbooks, or digital textbooks. Some institutions custom design and implement electronic textbooks to meet their specific needs.

Using electronic textbooks has some advantages as well as disadvantages. Here I want to inform the readers:

- E-textbooks may take up a lot of memory storage on a tablet or laptop.
- Most textbooks are expensive compared to purchasing the book in electronic form.
- E-textbooks allow you to carry one device rather than many books.
- Traditional textbooks are more expensive than e-textbooks, but only some e-textbooks allow you to take notes. Highlighting and taking notes during class may help you study efficiently, something that is more easily done with textbooks.

According to Simon & Garcia-Belmar, the dramatic advancement in technology has undeniably brought innovations that can play a significant role in reshaping teaching and learning practices. These innovations have provided students access to much more information than has been previously available. They have also affected the manner in which students interact with materials. As an innovation, electronic books (or simply e-books) have been a viable format since late 1990s. Electronic textbooks (or e-textbooks) are e-books that contain educational materials and functions, and are used for educational purposes. Some of these educational purposes, however, require that the design of electronic textbooks be interactive, collaborative, and differ for students of different learning abilities. Therefore, electronic textbooks support authentic learning by incorporating collaborative tools such as peer review, sharing functionality, and content creation. According to Rockinson-Szapkiw digital course materials included in electronic textbooks have more interactive tools that support student learning inside and outside the classroom.

Baker-Eveleth and Stone asserted that the use of digital book format in education is a trend that will not disappear in the short term. Since this trend is heavily and constantly supported by the technological and publishing industries, e-books or e-textbooks are continuously being updated to improve their features and functionality for a pleasant student experience. Unfortunately, in spite of this, the adoption of electronic textbooks by students has been surprisingly slow and has not yet reached an acceptable level. Therefore, more time and more research are needed to better understand and evaluate this trend and its implications in education. The purpose of this study is to assess the experience of college students regarding their usage of and preference

for two textbook formats, electronic and print. The study also looked at the reasons for which students expressed their preference for one textbook format over the other. The understanding obtained from this study can provide some important guidelines on how to enhance the successful adoption of electronic textbooks in university education. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- How frequently do students use their print and electronic textbooks?
- How many hours a week do students usually spend on reading their print and electronic textbooks?
- What is students' preference for textbook format?
- What are the reasons for students' preference of textbook format?

The contribution of the e-textbooks can be enormous considering their additional supporting features, but adoption has not crystallized yet. Researchers have been somewhat split on their perspectives. Lee, Messom, and Yau (2013) suggested that digitized forms of textbooks, "will potentially replace existing paper-based textbooks in the school curriculum" (p. 32). Districts have been making a shift toward digital content and incorporating online or digital textbooks when updating their curriculum. In the near future, print versions of textbooks could be obsolete just like phone booths and cassette tapes. As society shifts toward the best technologies available, it is likely that the trend will also take over curriculum in schools. Digital content may become more dominant. Textbooks are an integral part of curriculum in schools. They "provide detailed development of topics, comprehensive coverage of content, high-quality graphics and photos, selected data conveniently tabulated, many exercises and problems to solve, and sundry other features useful to students". Since educators use textbooks as a main resource to provide information to their students, there is a lot to consider when choosing a good textbook to use in the classroom.

All in all, Technology is constantly changing and improving, as are educational resources. There is relatively limited research available on the impact of digital textbooks. It would be interesting to examine the effects of digital resources in the near future when more research has been done. Finding studies that relate more specifically to math classrooms or similar subject areas would be enlightening. I would also like to review studies that use a hybrid approach instead of limiting it to print versus digital. Understanding how to integrate both types of resources in the classroom effectively would be beneficial as an educator. Conducting a local study would also be valuable. Understanding the perceptions and resources available near my own district would be beneficial when deciding on future curriculum. I would also like to see more data that relates to high school students. Looking at subject specific data from other schools could also be insightful. Only time will tell what the future of e-textbooks looks like in education. A future research question could focus on whether they work better for some subjects than in others.

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